6: McFee E-4,5 (1959-1967) 1972 NF6 Blackfoot NF6

includes the majority of the white-oriented group and, in reality, is more a convenient collection of a series of gradually changing ranks than it is a single status position. The people who occupy these status positions, however, share a few general characteristics: they are (1) regularly employed, (2) committed to individual progress, (3) active participants in community affairs, and (4) they clearly support and exemplify the white-oriented values.

Individuals in this classification represent a wide range of economic and social achievement. Occupations of middle status people range from regularly employed craftsmen through clerical workers in business, agency, and council to businessmen, politicians, small farmers, and ranchers. Not all are financially independent, but all are building toward that goal. This is a characteristic that stands out in the interview materials. These people think about their future and the future of their children—they have plans for tomorrow. It shows in "Bob Sorrel Horse's dream" reported by a poor white-oriented full-blood rancher, who, by his industry may just qualify for middle status even though his annual cash income seldom exceeds $2,000:

> I have this dream to get some money and fix this place up right—a nice house and a good place. First, I'd get electricity in to pump the water. I had planned to remodel the house . . . to have a place I'm not ashamed of.

Yet while he dreams, this man acts. He cared for his small herd of thirteen head of cattle and a few horses, had a sound shelter and well-maintained corrals for the stock. The grounds around the house were uncluttered, all garbage and debris was in one pile some distance from the house. A good supply of firewood was cut and stacked near the house. A clothesline, outhouse, and small utility shed were all in good order.

The house in which six people lived was an old log structure with two rooms on the ground floor and one loft room above. It was well chinked and the old hand split shake roof was in good repair. Water was carried from a pitcher pump mounted at the well a few feet from the cabin door; there was no electricity and gas lanterns provided the light. A wood range provided the heat. The interior walls were painted, cotton curtains hung at the windows and a worn rug covered part of the linoleum floor. The home furnishings consisted of a painted washstand, wooden table, wooden chairs, a kitchen cupboard, one double and two single beds, homemade closets, a nightstand, and a high chair. Family photos, a calendar, a radio, two rifles, fishing gear, and other family possessions were to be seen. The children's bicycle, tricycles, wagon, and a stroller were stored in the shed out back. A zinc washtub hanging outside on the front wall of the cabin provided the clue to the laundry facilities. Everything was worn, clean, orderly and in good repair. This man was poor, yet he maintained what he had and dreamed of something better in the future.

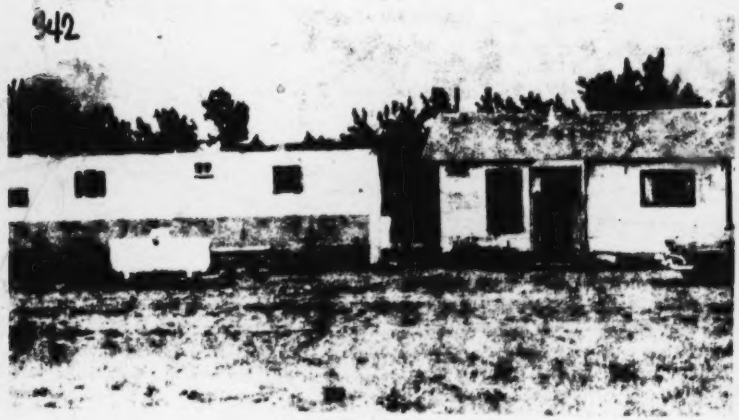
At the upper end of the scale, this same concern for the future is expressed by the well-to-do rancher, quoted in the earlier chapter, who built up his ranch for the boys and was concerned that the youngest son had no future with the railroad.

Middle status people join the service clubs, farm and cattle associations

and support and participate in community improvement projects. The leaders of F.F.A., 4-H, Boy and Girl Scouts, and the Youth Club are either whites or tribal members of this class. These people sponsor the Easter Egg Hunts, the Fishing Derbies, local sports events, and often the rodeos. They are not always the leaders, but are the active supporters of community, church, and school enterprises.

Middle status people are active politically. Tribal council positions and a few county elective offices are sought and often won by people of this classification, and they are actively supported or opposed, advised or criticized, by their peers.

People of middle status tend to live in well-constructed, well-maintained



Two kinds of rural housing.

homes. For example, Ray Hawkins, whose annual income was about $3,500, lived with his wife and four children in a four room frame house. It was freshly painted inside and out and the composition roof was in good condition at the time of my visit. There was a fenced yard, with lawn and flower beds, an outdoor fireplace and a picnic table. This house had electricity, inside plumbing with both hot and cold water supplied to the bathroom and kitchen. The interior walls were all lined and painted; the floors were wooden, covered with cotton rugs in the living room and bedrooms and with linoleum in the kitchen and bath. The comparatively large kitchen had built-in cabinets around and over the sink, an electric range and refrigerator, a heavy dining table, and solid wood chairs. There were cotton curtains at the windows. The bedrooms had built-in closets, beds and chests of drawers. The living room was well furnished with a fairly new davenport and living room chairs, each with its antimacassar. There was a coffee table, an ottoman, a piano, table lamps, a record player, and a radio. The windows were draped

II

BACKGROUND

The Blackfeet Reservation, with headquarters in Browning, Montana, lies for the most part in Glacier County with a small portion on the south and east extending into Ponderosa County, Montana. Most of the Reservation is on the eastern side of Glacier National Park in northwest Montana adjacent to the province of Alberta, Canada. Miles of green range and farmlands fan out from the base of the Rockies to form the Reservation which covers a tract of land 52 by 58 miles (see Figures 1 and 2).

The Reservation is served by rail and air and both local and national bus lines, as well as several local and transcontinental trucking lines. A network of Federal, State and local highways provides ready access to the important markets of Great Falls, Shelby and Havre, Montana. A full range of utilities is available on the Reservation - telephones, a plentiful water supply, and natural gas from gas fields in nearby Montana and Alberta. Only the larger communities of Browning and Cut Bank have adequate sewer systems. Electricity is supplied by a cooperative electric company from power developed at the Fort Peck Dam in eastern Montana. Approximately 2,000 kilowatt hours of power are available on the western side of the Reservation with considerably more on the eastern side.

The average rainfall measures 14.4 inches per year in the Browning area and 13.8 inches in the lower and eastern parts of the Reservation. Annual snowfall is approximately 63 inches. Mean temperatures range from 19° F. above zero in January to 61° in July. Frost has been reported as late as May 19 and as early as July 16 during the last seventy years. The major part of the Reservation is subject to strong and persistent westerly winds which are usually more severe during the early spring months. Generally the climate on the Reservation is of the semiarid type. The average growing season for irrigated crops is approximately 120 days. While the economy on the Reservation revolves largely around agriculture, significant raw materials are available in and under the land surface. Oil and natural gas are found in the eastern portion of the Reservation's well known Cut Bank oil fields. The Choteau iron deposit extends from the foot of the Rockies over the western half of the Reservation. Its titanium content is approximately 12 percent and the iron content is from 30-40 percent. Coal reserves are estimated at approximately 50,000,000 short tons. Abundant recreational facilities are available for outdoor activities. The many lakes offer boating, swimming and fishing. There is big game and upland bird hunting during certain seasons of the year. The Blackfeet Tribe recognizes the value of this important tribal property with respect to its potential for future development. It represents 1,500,000 acres of gently rolling plain between 3,500 and 4,500 feet above sea level.

The population of the Blackfeet Reservation in 1960 was 4,900. Approximately 50 percent (800) of the adult males on the Reservation have been classified as skilled or semiskilled workers. An almost equal percentage of adult females, 60 percent (300), are likewise categorized. Wage rates for males in manufacturing areas have reached $2.21 per hour while female employment rates

16: Hanks & Hanks E,P-4,5 (1938-1941) 1950
NF6 Blackfoot NF6
Northern Blackfoot
Blackfoot Reserve

Have these needs inferred by whites actually been satisfied? No, because despite rations, rent-free houses, educational opportunities, a hospital, and old-age pensions, we still find many instances of behaviour showing that these needs still exist. In spite of rations, the largest fraction of Blackfoot income goes for groceries. Blackfoot still build houses for themselves even though they have already been provided with houses. Some Blackfoot have paid for courses in technical schools in Calgary, a few leave the reserve to attend boarding-schools, while others have sought to enter the town schools. Though the sick frequently go to the Blackfoot hospital, others hire the services of medicine-men or white physicians in neighbouring towns. Few Indians cease to work at fifty when they first receive old-age benefits. Thus we may infer that despite the presence of means satisfying their needs, these needs are not fully satisfied. At best the trust fund helps diminish the urgency of some of them.

A somewhat tender-minded visitor who was acquainted with the existing economic structure might come away from the reserve with a different impression. He might be struck with the difference in the Indian's standard of living as compared with the white's. The houses are small, frequently in rather poor repair. In some places the wells are dry, and Indians must travel to the river, a distance of several miles, to obtain water. Wood for fires must also be gathered at this distance. Sanitary facilities are often dirty, in poor repair, and sometimes lacking. Interiors are sometimes unkempt, bedding patched, and not too clean. Furnishings are adequate in some houses, but in others there may be little more than a mattress in the corner for a bed. Modern conveniences practically do not exist: only one house has running water; three houses have electricity. Though a fair sprinkling of hand-driven washing and sewing machines exists, other households seem to lack even soap and thread. A few men own automobiles, but most travel by horse and wagon. As compared with middle-class whites, there is obviously a lower standard of living among the Indians on the reserve.

Do the Blackfoot feel a need for an improved standard of living? An unqualified answer cannot be given. Certain improvements seem to be rather universally desired, while others are seldom referred to. Judging by the activity shown in these directions, Blackfoot would like more food, better clothing, warmer housing, and larger amounts of furnishings. Many informants went to the nearest store as soon

16: Hanks & Hanks E,P-4,5 (1938-1941) 1950
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their houses looking neat is also seen from the efforts on the part of some families to plant shrubbery, to lay a concrete walk from the road to the door-step, to keep the grass short in the front yard, to hang lace curtains in the windows, to give white visitors the cup and saucer with the flower design, and to arrange the furnishings of the living room beforehand. From this we infer a need for better furnishing, particularly on the part of the poorer families.

Other indications of a higher standard of living might be plumbing, improved sanitation, electricity, and the various machines of the modern house. We have never heard anyone speak of the desire for running water in a house, though one of the three houses with electricity has piped water into the house from an electrically driven pump. At the mines, where running water is available in the community wash-house, the Indians use these facilities constantly for washing and laundering. Indeed, it is said that the Indians at the mines maintain the highest standard of cleanliness on the reserve. The only available source of running water other than the mine is the hospital, which provides the sole bathing facilities. When there is no running water available, inside toilets and cesspools are inconceivable. Some Indians living near a power line have considered introducing electricity into their homes. As the public utility company charges the expense of a transformer installation to the consumer, and wiring and fixtures are a further expense, most Blackfoot have rejected the idea after the initial inquiry.

Most of these attributes of a higher standard of living are considered not very important by the Blackfoot, but one must not reach conclusions on this basis alone. Through the countryside of southern Alberta, many white farmers also are without running water and electricity. In small towns there is frequently no sewage system, and outside toilets are assumed. Moreover, most of these accessories require some source of power. If whites are unable to afford these conveniences, still less could the Indians on their income.

Some Indians have purchased automobiles, though they soon discover that maintenance is a very costly affair. Frequently this has induced them to abandon the car. On the other hand the condition of the roads, the love of horses and the greater utility of the latter in rough country and cold winters, the greater carrying capacity of a wagon over a passenger car, all make team and wagon much more serviceable on the reserve.

101 Blood Reserve. Across the Belly River, adjacent to the community of Stand-off is the Stand-off colony of Hutterites, and on the south end of the St. Mary River Reservoir is an- 177 other larger Hutterite colony. Each of the colonies performs some services for the Indians, selling them produce and repairing broken machinery. The Hutterites also farm leased land on the Reserve and meet their Indian neighbors in the surrounding towns and villages.

207 [206] Today face to face personal communication is supplemented by television and radio as well as the telephone and telegraph. All of these sources are available to the contemporary Blood. Lethbridge has two commercial radio stations and a television station which broadcasts entertainment and [365] news. Radios and television sets are available to the Indian population, and, as the Reserve is nearly totally electri- 206 fied, they are widely in evidence. Telephones are not gener- [365] ally available on the Reserve, but all of the schools, government facilities, and the general store are so equipped. The local telegraph station is in the Canadian Pacific Railway terminal in Cardston, located on the railroad right-of-way on the Blood Reserve.

494 [491] The Blood seem to prefer the face-to-face mode of communication, however, and today people travel near and far by auto on the Provincial highways or the graveled roads 484 maintained by the Blood Band. The favored vehicle for 493

BLACKFEET RESERVATION

TRIBAL ECONOMY
Average annual tribal income is $500,000. Ninety percent of this income is derived from minerals and 10 percent from miscellaneous sources. There are several industrial enterprises on the reservation, including a pencil manufacturer and a lumber cut-stock plant, providing employment for tribal members and income to the tribe.

CLIMATE
Rainfall averages about 14 inches per year. The temperature ranges from a high of 85° to a low of −20°.

TRANSPORTATION
U.S. Highway 89 runs southeast-northwest, and U.S. Highway 2 runs east-west through the reservation. Train, bus, and truck services are available on the reservation at Browning, while commercial air service is available at Great Falls, 125 miles away.

COMMUNITY FACILITIES
A large community building is available at Browning for various tribal activities. A modern library with 3,000 volumes was recently completed. The water system at Browning is municipally owned. Electricity is furnished by Glacier Cooperative and natural gas by Montana Power Company. The U.S. Public Health Service hospital at Browning provides medical care for tribal members.

RECREATION
Browning, gateway to Glacier National Park, is the principal reservation shopping center. This is also the site of the Museum of the Plains Indians, a nationally known repository of Indian artifacts. North American Indian Days are celebrated annually with dances, ceremonies, and a rodeo. In addition to Glacier National Park, reservation recreation areas include Lower St. Mary's Lake, Duck Lake, and other such areas.

Vital Statistics

Population:	
Indians residing on or adjacent to reservation:	6,216
Labor Force:	
Total:	1,353
Unemployed:	495
Unemployment rate:	37%